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Provocative Performance

11.08.2013 | Culture and Society, Campus and Community

An innovative dance group with local ties and recently featured on *America's Got Talent* will return to Dayton this month for a week of energetic performances and discussions.

Hammerstep will perform at four events open to the public Nov. 18-23, including **a collaboration with the University of Dayton Dance Ensemble at 8 p.m. Nov. 22-23 at Kennedy Union Boll Theatre**. Tickets are \$12 for the general public and are available at the door and online at tickets.udayton.edu.

Hammerstep is co-founded by 2011 University of Dayton graduate Garrett Coleman. He and co-founder Jason Oremus are both classically trained, world-champion Irish step-dancers who now have their own high-energy company that takes dance to the street — and invites everyone to get involved.

"We wanted to freshen up Irish dance, because we felt it was getting a bit stale," said Coleman. "We were experimenting with styles that were progressive, urban, contemporary and relevant to youth, and Hammerstep emerged out of that."

Another aspect of Hammerstep's residency will be visiting and talking with classes, such as dance classes and first-year English classes. They will also engage in "guerrilla dance tactics" — short, pop-up events around campus intended to attract attention and break the "fourth wall" usually present at dance performances. Several other events are open to the public and scheduled throughout the week, including:

- **7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 19 - Creative Culture Exchange, ArtStreet** - A discussion among leading regional dancers — and Hammerstep dancers — about the future of dance in America. Free and open to the public.
- **9 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 20 - Cypher: Performance in the Round, McGinnis Center** - A demo by Hammerstep of their urban mash-up of step-dancing and hip-hopping moves — and an invitation to learn a few new moves yourself. Free and open to the public.
- **8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 22, and 4 and 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 23 - Guest Appearance with the UD Dance Ensemble at Kennedy Union Boll Theatre** — The student-based UD Dance Ensemble will be joined in part of their program by Hammerstep, who have choreographed one of their numbers. Open to the public; tickets available at the door.

Hammerstep's residency is a part of the University of Dayton Arts Series, which brings professional artists to campus from across the globe for the benefit of both the University and Dayton communities. The series aims to present artists whose work is both challenging and exhilarating.

"Our objective is to help engage students in dance in new ways — to get them to think about it as something that can be a vital part of life, not just a remote event on stage," said Eileen Carr, University of Dayton Arts Series coordinator. "And we think Hammerstep does that in a completely high-energy way."

Hammerstep's core components are street, stage, outreach and engagement. Their unique approach to dance combines Irish, tap, hip-hop, African stepping and more into energetic, dynamic performances. The group places great importance on engaging youth and marginalized cultures in their performances and have participated in many outreach projects, including Cityfolk's Culture Builds Community program.

For more information, contact Cameron Fullam, assistant director of media relations, at 937-229-3256 or fullam@udayton.edu.